

REMARKS

The following remarks will address the Examiner's findings in the order in which they are stated in the Office Action of August 27, 2003.

In regard to the Information Disclosure Statement filed December 22, 1998, a copy of the German Offenlegungsschrift DE 196 37 001 A1 with an English language Abstract is submitted as an attachment hereto. Consideration of this reference is respectfully requested.

The issues regarding the Specification have been addressed as follows:

The Abstract has been amended to conform to the requirements of MPEP § 608.01 (b). A marked-up version of the Abstract is presented above under "Amendments to the Specification". In addition, a clean version on a separate sheet is submitted as an attachment hereto.

The subtitles "Background of the Invention", etc. and the places where they are to be inserted in the specification are stated above under "Amendments to the Specification".

Claims 2 to 10 are pending in the application, after claim 1 has been canceled without prejudice by the present amendment.

Claims 2 and 3 stand objected to because of informalities. Applicants have made the required corrections in conformance with the Examiner's findings.

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No new matter is introduced by any of the amendments to the claims and the specification that are presented herein.

Applicants note with appreciation that the Examiner has allowed claim 2, which forms the independent main claim of the present application. As a consequence of claim 2 being allowed, applicants respectfully submit that claims 3-10 should be allowed because they depend on an allowable main claim and that the remaining claims rejections under 35 USC §102 and § 103 are therefore a moot issue.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in condition for immediate allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

Dated: December 22, 2003

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments:

- Amended Abstract of the Disclosure
- Petition for one-month extension of time with requisite fee
- copy of DE 196 37 001 A1 with an English language Abstract

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